

THE SHELTON CHRONICLE

a newsletter for faculty and staff of Shelton State

FIRST GRADUATES OF WELFARE TO WORK INITIATIVE

"This new welfare-to-work program is good, and I can sure recommend Shelton's eight-week truck driving program. But I want to add something to that. Nobody is going to pull you in this life. You have to get up and move. Take the first step."

Meryl McElroy, one of the first graduates of West Alabama's new welfare-to-work initiative

McElroy, who is originally from New York, moved to Eutaw, Alabama, a few years ago to look after her mother. "I was never on welfare while in New York. I had always been able to find a job. However, when I got to Eutaw, I couldn't find work. I'm a single mom with three children," McElroy said.

McElroy entered Shelton's short term truck driving program earlier this year through a cooperative program between Community Services of West Alabama and Shelton State Community College. The program, "Work First," is funded through a \$420,000 grant by the Alabama Department of Economic and Community Affairs and serves people

in Tuscaloosa and Greene counties.

People selected for the program receive supportive services of agencies involved including transportation, child care, drug counseling, violence prevention, job and career training. Shelton State's role is to provide technical training to the participants in order to move them into the job market. Several eight-week short courses, including truck driving, have been offered this spring through the new program.

Truck driving is a challenge, and I like challenges.

"I've been a cashier, a manager, a nurse's aid, and a teacher's aid in the past. But I never drove a big truck," said McElroy.

Much camaraderie has developed between the women in the program. Peggy Ivy of Northport first met McElroy in 1999 when both entered the Community Services Program. "We met and found we had a lot in common. I'm a single mom too with two children," Ivy said.

This week both women will graduate from the certificate program at Shelton State. Anxiously waiting to pass their road test, McElroy and Ivy will then receive their Commercial Drivers License. After that the next

step for them will be to find a job with a trucking company.

"Several weeks ago, I almost gave up," said Ivy. "It's very hard trying to run that big truck. I stayed with it though. My instructors were patient and nice and helped me out. I know the tears got to come though when I get my certificate."

McElroy and Ivy are both looking forward to completing the program and looking for a job. Although still on welfare, both women look forward to the time when they have a job and can start making money in their new career.

"Trucking companies pay \$.25 - \$.36 a mile. If you can drive 500 miles a day, that's good money," said McElroy. With this job comes not only personal satisfaction but the financial resources both women need to provide for their families.

"I'm excited about the future," said Ivy. "I'll be able to buy things for my kids, get them the things they need. Eventually, I'd like to get a little house and maybe save some money for my children's education." Because both women have young children, they are looking for short hauls in their job search so they won't have to be away from home overnight.

These last two months have not been easy ones for the two women. The truck driving class begins each morning at 8 a.m. and ends at 2:30 p.m. Community Services provides transportation, but for McElroy this often means it is dinnertime before she arrives back home in Eutaw. "My sister keeps my children in the afternoons until I can get home. She feeds them supper too so I don't have to do that," McElroy adds.

Ivy doesn't have to ride as far to get home but she says she's so tired at night she almost falls into bed. "I give my children something to eat and then I just fall out. Truck driving is hard work. After leaving these trucks, I don't feel like cooking dinner," Ivy said.

With this job comes not only personal satisfaction but the financial resources both women need to provide for their families. Almost tenderly, the women finger the certificates already filled out on the table. "As long as they keep the same instructors, I would recommend this program," said Ivy.

"Two more women recently entered the program from CSP," said McElroy. "Who knows? Maybe they'll follow in our footsteps."

WEBMASTER ANNOUNCED

Paul Sellers has been named the new Webmaster for Shelton State and in this position, he will be responsible for the college's web page. Operations for the web page will be in addition to his other duties.

According to Sellers, Shelton's web page, although accessible, is currently in a state of transition but should be updated soon.

COLLEGE SET FOR GALA

The second annual Alabama Stage and Screen Hall of Fame induction ceremony will be this Saturday, March 18, in the Bean-Brown Theatre on the Martin Campus. Inductees this year are John Badham, Polly Holliday, Nell Carter, and Lois Wilson. Festivities begin at 7:30 p.m. with a cocktail supper and dancing. For information or tickets, call Nickole Shultz, 2352.

NOMINEES TO 1999-2000 ALL-USA ACADEMIC TEAM

Two Shelton State students from Northport will represent the college in the 1999-2000 ALL-USA ACADEMIC TEAM competition. Selections for the All-Alabama Academic Team will be announced April 6 in Birmingham. Each two-year college in the state nominates two students.

Representing Shelton State are Kimberly Cockrell and Jennifer McGuff, both sophomore students at the college. Kimberly is a graduate of Tuscaloosa County High School and McGuff graduated from Northside High School.

Kimberly has a 4.0 grade point average at the college and attends Shelton on a Hope Academic Scholarship. She has been listed on the President's List each semester while at Shelton and was named to the National Dean's List in July 1999. She currently serves as vice president of leadership for Phi Theta Kappa, national two-year college honorary.

While at Shelton she has been elected Student Government

Association President and Homecoming Queen 1999. She is currently a Shelton Ambassador and was a cheerleader for the college in 1998-99. After graduating from Shelton in May, she plans to continue her education at a four-year institution and to ultimately pursue a career in human resources and personnel management.

McGuff is a member of Phi Theta Kappa and attended the Phi Theta Kappa Regional Honors Institute in 1998 and in 1999. She currently has a 3.96 grade point average at the college. She is a member of the college's Scholars Bowl Team, the Shelton Singers Concert Choir and the Bach-to-Rock Show Choir.

McGuff was the recipient of the James B. Allen Outstanding Student Award in 1998-99 and was named to the President List in 1998-99 and the National Dean's List in 1998. She is currently majoring in education and human performance and plans to complete her degree at a four-year university after graduation from Shelton State in May.

Update on FLOWER FUND

When someone from your office has been in the hospital or suffered a death or serious illness in their immediate family, please contact Ronda Shirley, ext. 2252. Supervisors are responsible for making the contact. However, it's everyone's responsibility to make this project successful. We want to make sure flowers are sent to all members of the Flower Fund during difficult times of death and illness.